



ARIZONA OFFICE OF
**PROBLEM
GAMBLING**

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New Study Suggests Most Arizona Teenagers Gamble

PHOENIX, Arizona (January 2007) — A study administered by the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission asked over 60,000 eighth, tenth, and twelfth graders how often they participated in various types of gambling. Of those who responded, 61% said they had gambled at least once in their life while 27% reported gambling frequently (at least once or twice per month). Nearly 50% more males reported frequent gambling than did females.

According to the survey, most often the gambling is on cards, team sports and personal skill games (such as pool, darts or bowling). While the survey does not assess the rate of disordered gambling among survey respondents, the results have caught the attention of problem gambling experts in the state.

“For the first time we have a scientifically rigorous measurement tool to help us understand youth gambling behavior in our state,” said Rick Pyper, Director of the Arizona Office of Problem Gambling. “This is a good beginning toward helping us understand what role these activities might play in indicating whether a gambling problem exists or whether one might develop in the future,” Pyper said.

International research to date suggests that problem gambling rates among young people are 2-4 times higher than the rates for adults – and many adult problem gamblers report starting gambling as early as age 10.

The growing popularity of Texas Hold-Em poker and Blackjack tournaments on television, along with the proliferation of gambling activities available on the internet has made gambling a popular activity among today’s youth. Additionally, “casino nights” and other events at graduations have made gambling a more acceptable behavior among young people.

The Office of Problem Gambling will utilize the survey results to plan prevention and education activities to minimize the rates of problem gambling in Arizona youth. “With this data we can begin to work with school systems, and local communities to proactively address youth gambling issues” said Paula Burns, Prevention and Education Administrator for the Office of Problem Gambling. “Our ability to plan and provide effective interventions is greatly enhanced

Help for problem gambling.

1.800.NEXTSTEP
(1.800.639.8738)

when we understand the attitudes and behaviors of the young people we are trying to reach,” Burns said.

In response to the survey results, the Office of Problem Gambling is sponsoring a symposium on youth gambling March 5th in Phoenix. The symposium features the world’s most renowned expert on youth gambling, Dr. Jeffrey Derevensky, as the keynote presenter, as well as other leading experts on gambling and problem gambling. For information on how to register for the symposium, visit the Office of Problem Gambling web site at www.problemgambling.az.gov.

In addition to the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission’s youth gambling report, and the symposium information, the Office of Problem Gambling web site has an extensive section providing information and resources on youth gambling. Among the information for parents is a list of warning signs that can indicate whether a young person may have a gambling problem. Some of these warning signs include:

- Saying that gambling is an easy way to make money.
- Gambling with money that’s supposed to be used for something else.
- Experiencing mood swings or stress when not gambling, or withdrawing from friends, family or outside activities.
- Promising to reduce gambling but not following through.
- Bragging about winning or displaying unexplained large amounts of money or new personal items.

The Office of Problem Gambling encourages those who think they have a problem or know someone who may have a problem to call **1.800.NEXT STEP** to get help.

“The **1.800.NEXT STEP** number is a tremendous resource for these individuals and their loved ones, and we encourage anyone — including parents of someone who may have a gambling problem — to give us a call, or visit us on the web at www.problemgambling.az.gov,” Pyper said.